**Telegraph offices/PCOs in the villages**

934. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA:
SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether only one-third of the villages have access to a telegraph office or PCO within 2 Kms.; and

(b) if so, the action proposed to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) There are no telegraph offices in the villages except combined offices which are normally a branch Post Office where facility for booking a telegram is available. Over and above, out of 6.07 lakh villages in the country, there are 5.1 lakh Village Public Telephones of BSNL which are nothing but a PCO. Action is being taken to provide a VPT (PCO) in all the remaining villages of the country progressively.

**Waiting list of telephone connections in Shimla**

†935. SHRI SURESH BHARDWAJ: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) year-wise number of the persons who are in waiting list for telephone connections in Tehsil Chirgaon under Rohdoo Telephone Exchange, Shimla;

(b) whether it is a fact that people living in Bhatwari, Jangla-Torasa, Devighar and Masali panchayats under Chirgaon Tehsil, who have deposited money for telephone connections for several years, are being pressurized by the officials of the Telecommunications Department to withdraw their amount;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.